

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3-7, 9-13, 15-19 and 21-27 are pending in this application. By this Response, claims 2, 8, 14 and 20 are canceled, claims 1, 6, 12 and 18 are amended, and claims 24-27 are added. Claims 1, 6, 12 and 18 are amended to incorporate the subject matter of canceled dependent claims 2, 8, 14 and 20, respectively. Claims 24-27 are added to recite additional features of the present invention. Support for the subject matter of claims 24-27 may be found at least at page 13, line 10 to page 15, line 22. No new matter is added by the above amendments or newly added claims. Reconsideration of the claims in view of the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

I. Telephone Interview

Applicants thank Examiner Rivero and Primary Examiner Smits for the courtesies extended to Applicants' representative during the April 27, 2005 telephone interview. During the telephone interview, Applicants' representative discussed the above amendments and newly added claims and the distinctions over the cited prior art. Examiners Rivero and Smits agreed that the above amendments to the claims overcome the rejections set forth in the outstanding Office Action. Therefore, it is Applicants' understanding that the application stands in condition for allowance pending the Examiners' updated search. The substance of the interview is summarized in the following remarks.

II. Rejection of Claims 1-23 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a)

The Office Action rejects claims 1-23 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Hambleton et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,178,404) in view of Bae (U.S. Patent No. 6,801,619). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

With regard to claim 1, which is representative of the other rejected independent claims 6, 12 and 18 with regard to similarly recited subject matter, reads as follows:

1. A method for handling information used in customer service, said method comprising:
 - capturing a customer's speech;
 - recognizing a key word in said customer's speech;
 - based on said key word, searching a database; and
 - retrieving information from said database, wherein said retrieving is completed during a conversation involving said customer and a customer service representative; and
 - providing said retrieved information to a customer service representative. (emphasis added)

Neither Hambleton nor Bae, either alone or in combination, teach or suggest recognizing key words in customer's speech, searching a database to retrieve information during a conversation between the customer and a customer service representative, and then providing the retrieved information to the customer service representative.

Hambleton teaches a system in which speech recognition is used to provide a voice response to a user. Bae teaches a system for pairing up a customer with a customer service representative that the customer previously communicated with. Neither reference is concerned with using speech recognition on a customer's speech in order to aid a customer service representative by providing information retrieved from a database based on the speech recognition to the customer service representative.

Hambleton is concerned with providing a set of tools to facilitate the creation of sophisticated speech enabled applications. Hambleton further teaches that the speech enabled application provides a voice response unit which is capable of responding to input speech by comparing it to stored phrases. However, as recognized by the Office Action, nowhere in Hambleton is there any teaching or suggestion to use the system of Hambleton to recognize key words in a customer's speech, retrieve information from a database based on the key words, and provide this information to a customer service representative. To the contrary, Hambleton teaches that the speech recognition is only used to provide responses to the customer, not to provide information retrieved from a database based on key words in the customer's speech to a customer service representative.

Bae also does not teach or suggest this feature. Bae teaches a system for providing remote customer service. Bae teaches that such systems may include video-

conferencing, remote control so that the customer and operator may collaborate on web-navigation, data entry, and walk-through various scenarios together. With the system of Bae, the customer logs onto the Bae system using his/her computer workstation. The system identifies the customer and then the operators that the customer has previously communicated with. The system then determines if the operators are available, and if so, connects the customer with one of the operators.

These distinctions were discussed during the April 27, 2005 telephone interview with Examiner Rivero and Primary Examiner Smits. The Examiners agreed that the present claims define over the alleged combination of Hambleton and Bae. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1, 3-7, 9-13, 15-19 and 21-23 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

III. Newly Added Claims 24-27

Claims 24-27 are added to recite additional features of the present invention. In addition to distinguishing over Hambleton and Bae by virtue of their dependency on claim 1, claims 24-27 recite additional features not taught or suggested by Hambleton and Bae. Claim 24 recites that providing retrieved information to a customer service representative includes identifying a plurality of actions that may be performed to address an issue raised by the customer during the conversation, ranking actions within the plurality of actions based on a criteria to thereby generate a ranked list of actions for addressing the issue, and outputting the ranked list of actions to the customer service representative. Nowhere in either reference is there any teaching or suggestion to generate a ranked list of actions based on information retrieved from a database, wherein the information is retrieved based on key words recognized from customer speech.

Claim 25 recites requesting approval of the action from the customer service representative and stopping the action if the customer service representative does not provide approval of the action. Nowhere in Hambleton or Bae is there any teaching or suggestion that an action is initiated and that a customer service representative is requested to approve the action or else the action is stopped.

Claim 26 recites initiating an action in the ranked list of actions, requesting approval of the action from the customer service representative, stopping the action if the customer service representative does not provide approval of the action, removing the action from the ranked list of actions in response to stopping the action, and revising the ranked list of actions in response to removing the action from the ranked list of actions. Nowhere in Hambleton or Bae is there any teaching of removing an action from a ranked list of actions if the action is stopped due to a customer service representative not approving the action. Moreover, nowhere in Hambleton or Bae is there any teaching or suggestion to revise a ranked list of actions in response to removal of such an action.

Claim 27 recites performing a plurality of actions in the ranked list of actions in an order determined based on the ranking of actions in the ranked list of actions. Nowhere in Hambleton or Bae is there any teaching or suggestion to perform a plurality of actions from a ranked list of actions in an order determined based on the ranking.

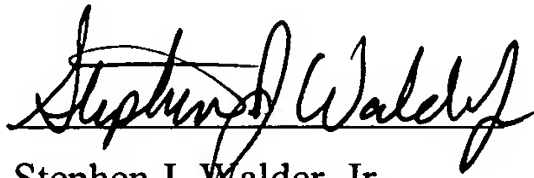
Thus, in addition to being dependent upon claim 1, these claims are allowable over the cited references by virtue of the specific features recited in each of these claims. Therefore, prompt and favorable consideration of newly added claims 24-27 is respectfully requested.

IV. Conclusion

It is respectfully urged that the subject application is now in condition for allowance. The Examiner is invited to call the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number if in the opinion of the Examiner such a telephone conference would expedite or aid the prosecution and examination of this application.

Respectfully submitted,

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